

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An inquiry processing apparatus for providing web pages to a browser terminal via a network, the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages other than the inquiry page, comprising:

5 a first providing unit configured to provide hierarchically arranged web pages to a browser terminal via a network, the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages;

10 a recording unit operable configured to record therein a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal;

15 a receiving unit operable configured to receive an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal;

a judging unit operable configured to judge, when the inquiry is received, whether a predetermined any content page of a predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal, based on the history of the provision of content pages; and

20 a second providing unit operable configured to provide the received inquiry and a result of the judgment to a responder terminal used by a responder for responding to the inquiry, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal.

2. (Currently Amended) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising

25 a checking unit operable configured to check, each time a content page is provided to the browser terminal, whether the content page is of the predetermined hierarchical level content page, wherein

the recording unit records a result of the checking as the history.

3. (Currently Amended) An inquiry processing method for use by an electronic catalog presenting apparatus ~~that provides web pages to a browser terminal via a network, the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages other than the inquiry page,~~ comprising:

5 a first providing step of providing hierarchically arranged web pages to a browser terminal via a network, the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages;

a recording step of recording therein a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal;

10 a receiving step of receiving an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal;

a judging step of judging, when the inquiry is received, whether a predetermined any content page of a predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal, based on the history of the provision of content pages; and

15 a second providing step of providing the received inquiry and a result of the judgment to a responder terminal used by a responder for responding to the inquiry, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the predetermined hierarchical level is a lowest level of the hierarchically arranged web pages.

6. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the judging unit is configured to provide a negative judgment if no content page of the predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal.

7. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the judging unit is configured to provide a positive judgment if at least one content page of the predetermined hierarchical level has been provided to the browser terminal.

8. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the responder terminal is configured to display the result of the judgment.

9. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a database configured to store the result of the judgment.

10. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the responder terminal is configured to display the history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal.

11. (New) An inquiry processing apparatus comprising:
 - a first providing unit configured to provide hierarchically arranged web pages as requested by a browser terminal via a network, the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry from the browser terminal relevant to content provided by the web pages and content pages;
 - 5 a recording unit configured to record therein a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal;
 - a receiving unit configured to receive an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal;
 - 10 a specifying unit configured to specify which of the content pages has an inquiry button clicked to call the inquiry page on which the inquiry received by the receiving unit is entered;
 - a responding terminal; and
 - 15 a second receiving unit configured to provide the received inquiry and information indicating the content pages specified by the specifying unit for display on the responder terminal used by a responder to enable responding to the inquiry based on knowledge of the content pages previously provided to the browser terminal, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal.
12. (New) The inquiry processing apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein the second providing unit further provides a content page arranged at a lower level of the content page specified by the specifying unit to the responder terminal.

13. (New) An inquiry processing method for enabling a responding terminal to display information relevant to an inquiry from a browser terminal, comprising:

5 a first providing step of providing hierarchically arranged web pages to the browser terminal via a network, the web pages including an inquiry page for entering an inquiry and content pages;

10 a recording step of recording a history of the provision of content pages to the browser terminal;

15 a receiving step of receiving an inquiry entered into the inquiry page via the browser terminal;

20 a specifying step of specifying which of the content pages has an inquiry button clicked to call the inquiry page on which the inquiry received by the receiving unit is entered; and

25 a second providing step of providing the received inquiry and information indicating the content page specified by the specifying unit to the responder terminal used by a responder for responding to the inquiry, the responder terminal being different from the browser terminal.